

## AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE 1980s

*There is a law affecting the growth of libraries not unlike that of geometric progression. By the principle of noblesse oblige, a library which has attained a certain size is called upon to grow much faster than when it was smaller. Each year's additions result in a good many books which are but beginnings of series to be indefinitely continued; or the enlargement of the scope of the library by the purchase of books in some department hitherto neglected makes it necessary to cover the increased ground every year thereafter. Not long ago the trustees of the Astor Library (now the NYPL) complained that they could hardly use any of their large income for the purchase of really new books, on account of the demands for continuation of series already commenced . . . As our numerous libraries grow, this tendency to demand largely increasing funds and to require larger and still larger buildings gives serious occasion to pause and look the matter over to see what can be done by way of relief.<sup>1</sup>*

This is not, as might have been imagined, a contemporary *cri de coeur* from an Australian university librarian or a beleaguered administrator, but an extract from a book written in 1894. In this the author is troubled by the rising cost of series and the problems of library storage. His suggested solution was increasing co-operation between libraries!

Library co-operation is once again the watchword as individual university libraries find their funds cut and a collective strength is sought. Effective resource sharing mechanisms do require, however, the input of additional funds to ensure their establishment and this is always more difficult in times of economic restraint.

### Role of National Library of Australia (NLA)

In this library co-operation the role of the NLA is crucial although it too suffered significant budget reductions in 1981. While the National Library of Canada's total operating budget for 1981/2 has been increased by 24.5% over 1980/1, with its acquisition funds rising by 30%, the NLA's Information Bulletin of 13 November, 1981, provides the following sorry reading:

*During 1980-81 the Library spent 72 per cent of its printed library materials budget on serials, a total of \$1.78 million. Assuming that prices rise no more sharply than over the last five years, the same serial list would have absorbed 85 per cent of the 1981-82 funds. In the*

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*Library's view the balance, only 15 per cent of the \$2.486 million allocated for the purchase of printed library materials, would have been quite insufficient to enable it to acquire enough non-serial material to discharge its statutory responsibilities.*

*In order to restore a reasonable balance in the book budget, the Library seriously considered reducing its expenditure on serials to 65 per cent of available funds, but decided that this would have very serious effects on the national resource. Instead it was decided to hold serial expenditure at the 72 per cent figure achieved in 1980-81. Even this decision means that subscriptions and standing orders to a total of \$268,000 (1980-81 costs) have to be cancelled.*

*The decision to reduce expenditure on serial publications is one which the National Library has made only with great reluctance. The Library is conscious that other Australian libraries, themselves subject to growing financial pressures, now place an increasing reliance on the National Library's collections and services and it is aware that many Australian libraries, and indeed libraries in the South East Asian and Pacific Region, would like to see the National Library maintain its serial subscriptions at their present level. The Library realises that this reduction must affect its ability to provide adequate document backup for serials indexed in data bases and to sustain the level of inter-library loan and photocopying requests satisfied from its collection. The Library profoundly regrets that the size and urgency of the cancellation task has precluded it from consulting in any detail with other libraries.*

The areas of cancellation have primarily related to standing order foreign language material from European and East Asian suppliers, low use expensive serials, particularly in science, and duplicate copies of reference works and similar material. The fact that the NLA was unable to consult widely on cancellations, due to the time shortages relating to invoice receipts, causes particular concern because university libraries, particularly in the eastern States, which have cancelled serials in the past have often done so knowing a loan copy was available from the NLA.

Sir Peter Crisp, the Chairman of AACOBS (Australian Advisory Committee on Bibliographical Services) wrote to the Prime Minister on 2 September, 1981. His letter included the following paragraph:

*The financial situation of the National Library is of great concern to all libraries in Australia. Most libraries are directly or indirectly supported by public funds and the present financial climate is compelling all libraries to seek economies through even greater rationalisation and interdependence, both of which have a long and successful history in Australia. The National Library is the keystone of these cooperative activities. Inability of the National Library to play the role which only it can undertake will prevent other libraries from using their share of public funds in the most efficient manner. Such a situation would be most unfortunate in a world in which access to information is fundamental to the health of the national economy.<sup>2</sup>*

There is no evidence to date that the Government has heeded these words. With further public service cuts rumoured in Canberra, it is thus vital for all concerned to lobby to ensure that these cuts do not eventuate.

Having said this, there is still perhaps a need for the NLA to continue to debate what its collection building role should be, e.g. in relation to actual users in Canberra, to providing an improved national loan service, etc. In this context, the recently retired Librarian of La Trobe University, Dietrich Borchardt, has written a most stimulating article which deserves widespread discussion in the library and academic community and in the NLA.<sup>3</sup> The fact that the NLA published this article in its own *Acquisitions Newsletter* indicates a more open policy towards debate than sometimes occurred in the 1970s. Borchardt surmises, if the NLA's collection continues to be developed as one that is appropriate to a research library, undoubtedly one must ask 'Research into what? And what kind of research? And research by whom?'<sup>4</sup>

### Place of University Libraries in National Bibliographical Provision

These are quite pertinent questions since one book in every eight in all the libraries of Australia is held in the NLA or the University of Sydney. This startling

fact was revealed by the Director-General of the NLA, Harrison Bryan, in his delivery of the 1981 annual lecture to the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.<sup>5</sup> Quite rightly, he points out that such an uneven distribution is not good. He notes that in this national distribution one-third of the nation's resources are held in libraries of the universities and colleges of advanced education. Thus university libraries 'from being relatively minor operations pathetically dependent, all too frequently, on their local state library . . . have emerged as the nation's major bibliographic resource.' One consequence of this can be a conflict between the primary responsibility of a university library to serve its own clientele but as a result of its resources to provide a service elsewhere, e.g. through the inter-library loan network.

Quantity does not, of course, always relate to quality but it is a useful yardstick from which to make international comparisons. In this context Australian libraries, within a shorter growth period, are comparable to many British university libraries outside Oxbridge and London, but are less favourably placed when US research libraries are considered.<sup>6</sup> Here only Sydney, with nearly 3 million volumes, approaches anywhere near the middle to top rankings issued by the American Association of Research Libraries. The 1979 FAUSA Report on Research in Universities has indicated that while Australian undergraduate users are no longer greatly disadvantaged by comparison with their British counterparts, this is not always the case for those involved in advanced study and research.<sup>7</sup> It highlights the fact that 'Australia is a very long way from the great library collections . . . in Europe and North America' and 'Australian university libraries, with the strengths which they do have, are scattered over a vast continent: even the most far flung campus in Britain is, by Australian standards, close to the concentrated resources of the London area'.<sup>8</sup> The numerical growth documented in the statistics below must, therefore, be placed within this context and not taken as a signal for retreat.

### University Library Statistics 1980<sup>9</sup>

University	Total Vols. in System, End of Year	Staff (Excepting Bindery)		\$ Total Library Expenditure	% Total Library/ University (including research)
		\$ Total Acquisitions	\$ Salaries and Salary Costs		
Australian National University	1,075,941	1,514,995	3,197,786	5,341,980	5.6
University of Sydney	2,742,473	1,625,466	3,635,696	5,692,952	—
University of New South Wales	1,024,712	1,395,053	3,465,712	5,370,800	5.6
University of New England	471,725	545,805	1,003,430	1,714,533	6.5
Macquarie University	618,278	685,824	1,947,987	2,797,306	8.6
The University of Newcastle	427,031	612,347	986,351	1,675,639	7.2
The University of Wollongong	197,774	534,908	920,467	1,578,172	12.8
University of Melbourne	1,103,915	1,379,202	2,937,000	4,806,793	—
Monash University	1,029,487	1,349,657	2,856,425	4,722,446	7.2
La Trobe University	433,069	811,218	1,795,218	2,844,343	9.1
Deakin University	190,826	479,944	852,608	1,490,912	9.6
University of Queensland	1,214,842	1,359,362	3,372,351	5,235,732	6.0
Griffith University	181,158	329,920	709,347	1,129,320	10.3
James Cook University	235,303	493,457	671,073	1,275,386	7.1
The University of Adelaide	1,077,091	1,247,411	2,117,638	3,773,186	7.0
The Flinders University of South Australia	480,636	653,787	1,034,240	1,796,519	8.7
University of Tasmania	486,525	630,384	1,066,870	1,910,148	8.5
The University of Western Australia	831,530	1,214,653	1,834,141	3,332,582	7.6
Murdoch University	176,628	360,378	828,402	1,284,101	9.6

The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) using, in the main, these AARL statistics has summarised trends 1976-79 as follows. There is no reason to believe that trends have changed significantly in the 1980-82 period.

#### Growth of Selected Higher Education Libraries, Selected Statistics, 1976, 1978 and 1979

Selected statistics	Annual percentage change					
	1976	1978	1979	1976	1978	to 1978 p.c.
				to 1979 p.c.	1979 p.c.	
UNIVERSITIES						
Total volumes at end of year ('000)(a)	10,955	12,577	13,384	+7.1	+6.4	
Annual acquisitions						
— Monographs ('000)	516	550	502	+3.2	-8.7	
— Serials ('000)	202	195	178	-1.7	-8.7	
Reader places	34,015	34,867	34,905	+1.2	+1.1	
Library staff (FTE)	2,261	2,363	2,389	+2.2	+1.1	
Total loans transactions ('000)	5,503	6,013	6,324	+4.5	+5.2	
Average opening hours/week (hrs)	79.0	77.8	76.8	-0.8	-1.3	
Recurrent expenditure (\$m) (b)	52.3	56.8	55.6	+4.2	-2.1	
Students (enrolments)	153,464	159,406	160,142	+1.9	+0.5	
Teaching-and-research academic staff (FTE)	11,401	11,885	11,856	+2.1	-0.2	

(Source: Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission: Report for 1982-84 Triennium, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 88.)

(a) Monographs, serials, microforms.

(b) Estimated December quarter 1980 cost levels.

#### Inter-Library Loans (ILL)

If individual university libraries are unable to buy as many monographs as before then they will often have to make recourse to the inter-library loan system. The debate on the role of the collections of the NLA has already been referred to and the Librarian of Newcastle University, for one, has advocated the concept of the NLA as a lending library of first resort. Flowers argues:

*University libraries and CSIRO and all, except the National Library, have their primary responsibilities to their own clientele and as we hear from them from time to time, shouldn't be expected to be the mainstay of the interlending system, a role for which they simply are not good enough. No heavily trafficked open access library can be. We all have some idea of the problems our staff and students have in finding items in our libraries, the problems our own library staff have in retrieving items from the shelf for inter-lending, such problems as accidental and deliberate misplacement, theft and mutilation. The bigger the open access library, the worse this problem tends to be. This, allied to inadequate staffing rules out the university libraries as the continuing cornerstone of our system.<sup>14</sup>*

A fierce debate has taken place in the library profession on the inter-library loan imbalances and the question of charging for monograph loans. Some have vehemently argued for free access to information from publicly supported libraries, while others see charging as ensuring optimum use of information while relieving pressures on the staff of the major lending libraries. Certainly it is true that various British and American libraries have had no qualms in charging for loans. One is sympathetic to the fact that Deakin, if it faced a \$5 charge per loan, would have been charged \$37,560 in 1980 and this out of a Deakin periodical allocation then of only \$129,600. This does not help, however, the Librarians of Queensland and the University of New South Wales who have to cut their services to their own clientele to provide inter-library loans elsewhere. These have been costed for New South Wales at being at least \$50,000 p.a. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has recommended that no action take place until a CTEC funded study, the 'Weinstock' study is completed on the national ILL transaction patterns.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately the Weinstock Study seems to be hastening rather slowly and there are doubts, not least from Professor Weinstock, that his survey results will be relevant to the debate to charge or not to charge for inter-library loans. The situation will, therefore, perhaps not change for individual users much in the short term except for increased delays in receiving inter-library loans.

The decline in acquisition rate 1975-79 is reflected further in another CTEC table.

#### Distribution of Library Expenditure from Recurrent Funds at Australian Universities, 1975 to 1979

Item	1975 %	1976 %	1977 %	1978 %	1979 %
Salaries and salary-related costs (a)	64.4	65.0	64.7	64.2	65.7
Bookstock (b)	29.4	28.3	28.2	28.9	27.9
Other	6.2	6.7	7.1	6.8	6.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes expenditure on salaries, superannuation, payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance.  
(b) Includes expenditure on books, serial subscriptions and microforms.

(Source: Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission: Report for 1982-84 Triennium, Vol. 1, Pt. 2, p. 67.)

#### Staffing

As far as staffing is concerned the Universities Council of the CTEC made the following general statement in its 1982-84 Report (Vol. 1, Pt. 2, pp. 108-9):

*The Council accepts the views of universities set out in Chapter Six concerning the pressures which are now being placed on library resources, and is concerned that these pressures might be reducing the effectiveness of their operations. The Council recognises the rapidly increasing costs of books and periodicals, particularly from overseas, and believes this to be one area where universities are disadvantaged by the lack of more complete recompense for the effects of inflation. The Council also recognises the increasing recurrent costs associated with the maintenance of off-site storage areas now being used more frequently by universities to alleviate the problem of inadequate library space.*

*The various ways in which universities are increasing the efficiency of library operations, both internally and through resource sharing arrangements have already been noted (see paragraph 6.13). The Council is pleased to see the several initiatives being undertaken. It recognises however, that such developments carry with them costs which are unlikely to be alleviated in the short term. For example, there is a need for specialised staff to develop and operate computerised systems and, with restraints imposed on staffing levels, this might result in fewer staff to provide the day to day library services.*

While the recommendation in the Guidelines of this Report, as already noted, supported 'some increase in recurrent funding to assist in meeting changing needs for staff and in the maintenance of library services and buildings' (Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 235) the only specific comment in Volume 2 was that 'The Council has taken into account the special position in the ter-

tiary education sector of the libraries of the University of Adelaide, the University of Queensland and the University of Sydney in the levels of general recurrent grants recommended for the triennium' (Vol. 2, Pt. 2, p.92). It will be interesting at the time of writing to see how this 'recommendation' is translated into hard financial terms for each of the three institutions.

Thus opening hours around Australian university libraries may continue to diminish, a trend which the CTEC table had documented for the 1976-79 period. These reductions should not necessarily be great as universities have to reflect the priorities of an increasingly part time student body and the costs of this provision within the total budgetary structure of a university library. Cuts in this area can be politically dramatic as events in Oxford proved in 1981 when projected severe reductions in the Bodleian's opening hours were announced.

Less staff may well be available on reference desks and less reader education could well occur in public service areas. This may be acceptable to the senior academic who knows 'all about his or her field of research' and has an 'invisible college' to rely upon but not so good for others. A less visible decline but perhaps more significant could be cuts in technical services operations so that acquiring and cataloguing books will take longer.

#### Cataloguing

Many libraries already have backlogs in their cataloguing. This is often caused by staffing restraints and more recently by an international cataloguing code change, Anglo American Cataloguing Rules 2 (and not as is often claimed by a perverse desire for perfection on the part of cataloguers). University administrators often find it difficult to comprehend the rate of cataloguing output in their library, i.e. it is far too low. If comparisons are made with library output standards in other countries then this only reveals a global conspiracy on the part of cataloguers and librarians! A current example of the difficulties is shown by a book in hand at A.N.U. which mentions only *Papyrus 3024 from the Berlin Museum*. There is no indication of which Berlin. There is a choice from *World of Learning* of

1. **East Berlin:** Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Agyptisches Museum und Papyrus-Sammlung.  
or  
2. **West Berlin:** Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.  
Agyptisches Museum.

However, there is a BNB (British National Bibliography) Marc (machine readable) record which uses 'Agyptisches Museum und Papyrus-Sammlung'. Next found was that the ANU fiche catalogue has established 'Agyptisches Museum

(Berlin, Germany: Federal Republic)'. Four possibilities so far. A German colleague has indicated that it must be the East Berlin museum, which she knows well, and that it is in fact called *Staatliche Agyptisches Museum und Papyrus-Sammlung*. There are now five possible entry forms to consider with the possibility that the one chosen may still be incorrect.<sup>16</sup> When there can be millions of entries in a card catalogue chaos can result if individual inconsistency prevails.

It is unlikely, moreover, that dropping standards by omitting record elements would result in a significantly higher level of output. Further, there is the factor that as national and international bibliographical data bases develop, the standards for participants need to be high for two reasons. It is important to ensure that cataloguing records taken from these data bases are reliable; and when used to facilitate resource sharing activities such as inter-library loans, co-operative selection and cancellation, etc., the more uniform and thorough the information is, the more helpful it is likely to be. Furthermore, the latest bibliographic data bases require a very high standard of authority control, or consistency, to eliminate wasteful duplication and to facilitate on-line searching.

#### Networks

Once resource sharing networks have been established (not just postulated or discussed in embryonic terms) reductions in cataloguing output have usually ensued, e.g. with OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre) in the United States. This organisation, like RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) in the U.S.A. has been massively funded from federal, State, private and foundation sources, as has the British Library automated network, and yet in Australia networks are expected to be implemented, often with the same level of impact, by taking funds from already decreased budgets. Thus the following CTEC statement (Vol. 1, Pt. 1., p.89) is overly simplistic or just cynical!

*Even where annual acquisitions decline, total holdings will continue to increase, placing pressures on library space and on librarians to improve the efficiency of their operations. Libraries have sought to improve the efficiency of internal operations while maintaining the quality of services and the level of acquisitions, not only through increasing use of automated systems, but also through increasing co-operation. Such co-operation is both through informal agreement (such as exists in the areas-of-responsibility arrangements for acquisitions of the major libraries in the Sydney metropolitan area), and through formal network arrangements (such as CLANN [College Library Activities Network in New South Wales] and CAVAL [Co-operative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries]) . . . The Commission commends co-operative ventures which aim to improve the availability of library resources and services to users and to raise the efficiency of library operations. To the ex-*

*tent that cost savings and/or improved effectiveness of operations accrue to participating institutions through the use of such co-operative schemes, operating costs can be met from their recurrent funds, and the Commission does not propose to recommend earmarked grants for these ventures.*

There is thus a real danger by the CTEC and by others that developments undertaken on a relative shoestring are expected to be completed in a short time. Thus, discussions at the meetings of the Office of Library Co-operation (whose members in 1981 included the University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Newcastle, Macquarie University, University of Wollongong, State Library of New South Wales and the New South Wales Institute of Technology) illustrated the pros and cons of co-operative activities within a circumscribed budget.

Economic constraints have also impinged on the development of ABN, the Australian Bibliographic Network, which is being supported by the NLA as an automated national bibliographic service based on a co-operative on-line shared cataloguing facility. It aims primarily to develop a comprehensive national data base of machine readable records for all types of library materials. This undoubtedly offers the best hope for a national network with decentralised nodes. It has, however, only been developed by the NLA diverting internal resources to it and there will be integration problems and, therefore, probably initial falls in output, e.g. cataloguing for those libraries with existing automated data bases.

#### Acquisitions

Such complexities underpin technical services operations and yet are often not known by the average user. In a similar way, the length of time it takes to order, check and actually receive books can again be unrecognised. The A.N.U. Library orders monographs airmail when they are required urgently, e.g. for the short loan reserve system, but bulk air-lifting is still prohibitively expensive even with reduced monograph intakes. With less ships and more strikes surface seafarers are often taking an excessive period of time to arrive in Australia — some argue longer than the clippers took in the nineteenth century! At A.N.U. during 1979 it was estimated that the Library could obtain, via surface air-lifted mailing, all the journals that Blackwell's in Oxford supply to A.N.U., some 15% of the whole, for an extra \$10,000 p.a. The university decision-making community preferred, however, if the funds were to be made available (which they weren't!) for these to be used to prevent cancellations or to buy new journals which would then come surface mail!

Another area in which the 'tyranny of distance' is affecting Australian university libraries and their users is the reduced print runs of overseas monographs and the remaindering or pulping of stock after a very

short time to reduce storage and handling costs. This often means that books are out of print relatively soon after publication and to depend on journal reviews as a selection tool will be increasingly invalidated in Australia.

#### Library Building and Space Problems

When the volumes finally arrive and are catalogued there will be an ever increasing problem in the 1980s of where to store them. This issue is probably likely to cause as much furore in the university community than any other library issue than perhaps periodical cancellations. The 1976 report of the British U.G.C. Working Party on the Capital Provision for Libraries (the "Atkinson" Report) has received a fairly strong philosophical and economic battering.<sup>17</sup> This, therefore, is useful in combatting such statements as that by Professor Clarke and Lynn Edwards at Wollongong that 'one solution . . . is a change in the philosophy of librarianship involving the concept of a self-renewing rather than a repository library',<sup>18</sup> but the practical realities remain that without additional building funds then there is 'little immediate alternative to weeding, storage and microform' as one Canadian commentator recently observed.<sup>19</sup> All involve considerable recurrent costs — more over a period than a low cost compactus storage addition to an existing library building!

The Universities Council of the CTEC has recognised this additional drain on recurrent funds, but this was not picked up in Volume 2 of the 1982-84 Report, which also saw the removal of the Adelaide/Flinders joint library store from the list of building projects. It would seem that the CTEC has effectively shelved (if one can use that term here!) the library space problem until its research project in this area has been completed by the Monash University Graduate Library School. One of the principal investigators of this project, Richard Stayner, has indicated, however, that the range of options is limited.

*In view of the Commonwealth Government's funding guidelines for education, what options can be realistically considered by librarians, even if they were to abandon plans for low-density extensions to existing space? Is even high density warehouse space likely to be funded in the foreseeable future? The funding of regional cooperative storage ventures was made less likely as a result of a recommendation made by the TEC for the 1982-84 triennium. A national solution of a single store, even if it were slightly more likely to attract funding, would appear to be costly, unwieldy, and politically unattractive to the participants.*

*The research into library storage currently being carried out at Monash is based on the assumption that decisions will be made rationally. We are thus interested in three alternatives to low density expansion:*

- (i) no new building at all
- (ii) high density store, purpose built for a

(iii) single institution cooperative regional store. The different kinds of costs associated with each will be enumerated, and their relative importance discussed. The major impact of any of the alternatives will be to exert greater pressure on recurrent items of library budgets.<sup>20</sup>

If funds do not become available in the capital area then a demand to use recurrent funds for low cost extensions to existing buildings could prevail.

In the meantime, each university population will suffer inconvenience.<sup>21</sup> A.N.U. is expected to have 1/4 million volumes in its A.D. Hope Store by 1985, while Queensland's store, which is not airconditioned, will contain over 200,000 titles within five years, which will amount to one-seventh of the library's total number of books. In addition, it discarded 20,000 books in 1980 but there is a limit to this process. Most Australian university library collections have not accumulated enough 'rubbish' (even if this could be defined in an age when many overseas libraries collect ephemera) to weed easily. Nearly all the monographs at the A.N.U. have been individually selected. In addition,

*Weeding to discard or sell is much more difficult in a research collection . . . Weeding of unique copies to discard or sell is, in many classifications, exceedingly demanding of professional staff and faculty time. Consequently it is an expensive procedure. It is probably impossible to gain faculty help and support for such a project unless there is an excellent working relationship between librarians and faculty . . . Without this support it is doubtful that a massive unique title withdrawal is possible.<sup>22</sup>*

Where there is no effective relationship between the library and the academic staff then this can be a politically explosive situation!

To return to individual universities in Australia. The Librarian of the University of Newcastle has recently complained of a 'steadily increasing workload caused by the shortage of space and the expedients resorted to because of this'.<sup>23</sup> At La Trobe unless a mini extension is forthcoming in the immediate future either reader seating will have to be reduced by 36% or books and journals to the order of 20% of the total stock will have to be outhoused on or off campus. The *La Trobe University Library News* remarks that 'unless additional space is provided in the very near future, the effectiveness of the Library as a resource for teaching and research will be seriously diminished, e.g. the absence of these volumes from open access would seriously hinder study and research, and the cost of retrieval would be a severe strain on the Library's recurrent funds'.<sup>24</sup>

It must also be quite clearly stated that library space problems are not unique to Australia. Much detailed research and analysis has been undertaken in the United Kingdom. In the US the Systemwide Library Research team of the University of California has produced the following interesting table.<sup>25</sup>

Comparison of Estimated Costs of Weeding, Storing or Microforming 1,000,000 Bound Volumes

Alternative	Selection Cost	Implementation Cost	Cost Per Circulation
Conventional Library	\$ 0	\$12,660,000*	\$ 0.92
Weeding	\$1,400,000	\$ 0	\$17.16
High Density Storage	\$ 450,000	\$ 2,954,000*	\$ 3.16
Microform	\$ 700,000	\$34,753,000**	\$ 0.95***

\* Construction cost

\*\* Cost of production of microform and first purchase of readers and reader/printers

\*\*\* Cost includes replacement and maintenance for readers and reader/printers.

Thus one reading of this shows there is no microform 'fix' to library problems. The majority of material thus reduced would have to be originally microfilmed. The University of Adelaide has embarked, as a result of the report of the Select Committee on the Future Development of the Barr Smith Library, on acquiring the 'microform version of the 25% of current periodicals at present available in this medium' but this, it is understood, has faced considerable user resistance.<sup>26</sup>

### New Technologies

There also seems to be no immediate technological solution to the library storage problems on the library horizon. Many articles and books have appeared recently which indicate that society is now entering the 'information age'. Authors, such as Alvin Toffler in his recent book *The Third Wave*, have argued that this constitutes a revolution similar to the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the last two centuries. The mechanism of this information revolution is embodied in improvements within international and domestic telecommunications, e.g. satellites, teletext and digital data network systems, and by increasingly sophisticated storage and transmission devices such as mini-computers and videodiscs. Sadly for those who might see the revolution on information transfer technology as a solution to some library problems the new medium will not replace conventional messages, at least in the short term. The new technologies are only complementing existing sources of information and thus make the task

of the librarian/information provider and the user more complex. The vast majority of information received by libraries is still in conventional hard copy format and there is little immediate evidence that the publishing or information industries will drastically change their modes of information in the early 1980s. Librarians are not emphatically wedded to the book and are not slow to adopt new technologies (too quick, some might argue), but as the Librarian of the University of British Columbia wrote in April 1980 in the *UBC Alumni Chronicle* 'The book has not been dethroned as the repository of information'.

In simplistic terms there is also a user problem, as publishers have found out to their cost, *vis-a-vis* the new techniques. How many people take a microform to bed? Bruce Coward has written in the U.K. *Bookseller* for 5 April 1980: 'It seems unlikely that the advent of informatics (the provision of information by electronics) will have much effect on general trade publishing. After all, no one in his right mind is likely to want to read . . . a biography off a television screen.' It is likely that the main types of on-line journal will be those displaying scientific 'hard' data. 'Viewdata' or Prestel type television information services overseas have concentrated on the provision of 'instant' information such as stock exchange prices and news (probably of the Keesing's *Contemporary Archives* variety in the future). The Canadians believe that the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is unlikely to appear in its next edition in book form but will rather be stored and updated in electronic format.

One area which will increase in usage is on-line access to information data bases, notably those from overseas. The successful implementation in June 1979 by O.T.C. of its MIDAS telecommunication link to the United States has dramatically reduced telecommunication costs to such services as Lockheed Information Systems DIALOG service. This is only one of a number of US database providers available in Australia and yet DIALOG in itself offers more than 110 individual data bases containing over 35 million records. These data bases range in the sciences from *Geoarchive* to *Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau Abstracts* and in the social sciences and humanities from *Modern Languages Association Bibliography* to *Economic Abstracts International*. For certain types of data the computer in Palo Alto, California, can scan 35,000 references in a few seconds, which could take days or weeks to find in printed indexes.

The need, however, for careful search profiles is all important on intellectual and economic grounds. Most libraries impose a charge for these services in order to recoup data base, telecommunication and certain staff costs.<sup>27</sup> In an era of budgetary cutbacks for the University and the Library, charging for such services is inevitable unless direct subsidies are provided or other parts of the Library's services are curtailed.

The total amount of information in these data bases is awesome to contemplate and raises innumerable questions, e.g. can there be too much information provided, does access increase the number of inter-library loans required, who selects the information and on what basis, are such bases yet another example of intellectual imperialism or domination by multinational companies, can a rich student 'buy' better results by having a search undertaken, etc.?

In this context the Harvard Law Library's *modus operandi* has been revolutionised by students accessing case histories on terminals through the law data base LEXIS. These are but some of the issues that technological information changes present and while it has been estimated that 100 video discs could hold the information of the 18 million volumes of the Library of Congress, the cost of data transfer and input into the video disc format would be economically prohibitive at present. The weak link in the whole chain is the cost of data entry.

The scholars in the field of, say, Anglo-Saxon history often bemoan the scarcity of the surviving evidence, be it pottery, manuscripts or whatever, but perhaps they should count themselves fortunate. The increasing flood of twentieth century information is a virtue or a vice depending on one's standpoint, but libraries as the main organisations responsible for the effective provision of information will undoubtedly find their role more vital than ever in the real 'global village' of the 1980s and beyond.

An interesting development to watch is one titled ADONIS. Six publishers, Academic Press, Blackwell Scientific, Elsevier, Pergamon, Springer and John Wiley have agreed to investigate the possibility of electronic storage and subsequent delivery of published scientific, technical and medical (STM) journal articles including illustrations. From these stored images it is intended to retrieve and print onto paper, a page, article or any text required at better than office copier quality. ADONIS is expected to become operational early in 1984.

### University/College library mergers

Mergers between colleges and universities will have significant repercussions for libraries. There may indeed be long term advantages but in the short term the implications will be fairly severe unless additional funds are received to facilitate the change and at the time of writing there seems little likelihood of this. The Australian Conference of Principals of Colleges of Advanced Education are on record as stating that the CTEC funding provision is by no means adequate to meet the extra costs that merging institutions face. The practical case example of the Tasmania merger in the 1970s has shown the additional costs involved in such mergers. Thus David Waters of the University of Tasmania writes:

Typically when governments change direction in education, the effect upon libraries is not a primary consideration . . . From the foregoing it will be clear that the rationalisation of tertiary education in Tasmania has had a significant impact on the University of Tasmania library. Countless manhours have been occupied in discussions and planning over the last 18 months . . . Such hidden costs are, of course, never catered for by the architects of such amalgamations. Nor, indeed, are the more obvious costs of identifying, reprocessing and transferring library collections . . . one can only hope that libraries involved in future amalgamations will be able to convince the powers-that-be of the magnitude of such a project and its likely costs, but is more likely that they will not want to know.<sup>28</sup>

Alan Bundy, the Librarian of the Footscray Institute of Technology, has made an intensive study of U.K. amalgamations and has concluded the capacity of libraries to provide resources and services can be affected more by amalgamation than any other single element in colleges.<sup>29</sup> He notes this is a matter of great consequence to students, a fact which the Australian Union of Students has already recognised. Thus the implications, for, say, Newcastle, James Cook, Wollongong and perhaps Melbourne could be profound in library terms.

#### Governmental Priorities

The fact has been mentioned that the government is effectively cutting in real terms all sectors responsible for the provision of library and information services. The Report submitted by an Interdepartmental working group to the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment and published late in 1981 is symptomatic of this attitude.<sup>30</sup> This effectively 'buried' the Horton Report on public libraries and *en passant* referred to ABN (Australian Bibliographic Network) and the proposed ALIC (Australian Libraries and Information Council), although recommending neither for earmarked funds. While the Minister, Mr Wilson, argued in the House of Representatives that 'the Government remains determined to ensure that the information revolution is harnessed to the benefit of the whole community through the gradual development of more efficient and effective network on libraries in Australia', Barry Jones (Labor) responded that 'the Government's response is a sick joke. The grant provides 0.0000271 of the sums recommended . . . our libraries, relative to the enormous flow of information and the exponential increase in publications, are falling far behind'.<sup>31</sup>

#### Conclusion

The immediate outlook is therefore not a bright one either collectively or individually for university libraries and their users. Considerable lobbying and debate must take place on such issues as the need for library extensions and the adequate funding of

network developments. In this the librarians themselves must play their part within their respective communities which are often unaware of the complexities impinging on library operations and which can be influenced by the interplay of personalities in debates on library matters. University libraries must take heed of the following (perhaps tongue in cheek words) of an eminent British university librarian.

*Since the UGC consists largely of senior university teachers, these statements reassure us of the regard of our academic colleagues for their libraries. Interestingly enough, further reassurance, if not enlightenment, came with the concern forcibly expressed by academics and students over what they considered as a threat to their libraries in the 'self-renewing library' principle put forward by the Atkinson Committee. But are we, the librarians, included in this regard, or is the library they love just the books and the periodicals they need? What the prospective professor wants to know about the library (and he may want to know before accepting his appointment) is how strong the collections are in his field; and what the students note in their 'alternative prospectuses' is whether there are enough books for them. On the surface the librarians do not figure at all, except perhaps as that popular caricature, the lover of books and hater of borrowers, or at best something of a mystery, neither the 'necessary evil', the administrator, nor that 'necessary good', the academic . . . When funds are in short supply, competition is at its fiercest, and without the respect of our colleagues, without their confidence that we can use scarce resources efficiently for the good of the university, we shall not get them in sufficient quantities.<sup>32</sup>*

Nor might one therefore add or be able to convince the political masters and senior public servants of the national decline in libraries exemplified in lack of purchasing power, restricted opening hours, increased remote storage and reduced resource sharing. The Director-General of the NLA has summed it up succinctly in his 1981 address to the Academy of the Social Sciences.

*To maintain and restore the health of Australia's major libraries an essential prerequisite is conviction at government level of national importance of adequate library and information services . . . any reduction in access to information puts a premium on the expansion of knowledge and surely renders the getting of wisdom the less likely. To let the nation's major libraries run down is a risk which no nation can afford to take.<sup>33</sup>*

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